

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-02 ORM-02 BIB-01 /063 W
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R 130904Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3227
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINR, PROP, BU, FR
SUBJECT: KOSTOV DEFECTION CASE

REF: SOFIA 1500

1. FRENCH AMBASSADOR MALITCHENKO SAYS THAT ON JULY 12 THE FRENCH IN THEIR TURN DELIVERED A PROTEST TO THE BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR IN PARIS AGAINST UNFOUNDED ACCUSATIONS AND INSINUATIONS OF BULGARIAN MEDIA ABOUT FRENCH TREATMENT OF KOSTOV ASYLUM REQUEST.

2. MALITCHENKO ALSO QUITE ANNOYED THAT BULGARIAN MEDIA HAD DEFORMED WHAT SHE HAD TOLD BULGARIAN MFA: WHILE KOSTOV'S CATEGORICALLY REFUSE TO SEE BULGARIAN OFFICIAL REPS, THEY ONLY "FOR TIME BEING" REFUSE TO SEE THEIR MOTHERS.

3. INCIDENTALLY, PRESS HERE HAS ERRONEOUSLY REPORTED THAT BOTH PARENTS OF BOTH MR. AND MRS. KOSTOV WERE FLOWN TO PARIS TO PLEAD WITH THEM. ONLY THE MOTHERS WENT. (PRESUMABLY THE RISK THAT PARENTS OF BOTH DEFECTORS MIGHT ALSO DEFECT WAS JUST TOO LARGE, SO IN TIME-HONORED PRACTICE ONE
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PARENT OF EACH WAS KEPT HERE.)

4. FRENCH AND OTHER FRIENDLY EMBASSIES HERE ARE AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN BULGARIAN OVERREACTION TO THE KOSTOV DEFECTION, WHICH WOULD HAVE GONE ALL BUT UNNOTICED HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR VIRULENT MEDIA CAMPAIGN UNLEASHED BY AUTHORITIES HERE. BEST GURSS IS THAT THEY ARE AFRAID KOSTOV

WILL HAVE SOMETHING SENSATIONAL TO SAY WHEN HE IS SURFACED, AND THINK THEY ARE DISCREDITING THAT MESSAGE BY VEILED CLAIMS HE IS BEING PROGRAMMED BY FRENCH AND OTHER ENEMIES OF DETENTE.

5. NET EFFECT OF WHAT THE BULGARIANS ARE DOING, HOWEVER, IS TO INCREASE THE AUDIENCE WHICH KOSTOV IS LIKELY TO HAVE. MALITCHENKO SAYS BULGARIAN UNION OF JOURNALISTS HAS EVEN ADDRESSED ALL COUNTERPARTS AROUND THE WORLD ABOUT ALLEGED IMPROPER TREATMENT OF KOSTOV BY THE FRENCH. RESULT OF COURSE WILL BE TO STIMULATE THEIR INTEREST IN

WHAT, IF ANYTHING, KOSTOV MAY REVEAL ABOUT HIS ACTIVITIES AS BULGARIAN CORRESPONDENT IN PARIS.

6. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT IN DIPLOMATIC QUARTERS HERE THAT KOSTOV COULD POSSIBLY HAVE SPENT ALL HIS TIME ON HIS JOURNALISTIC DUTIES IN PARIS, CONSIDERING HOW LITTLE COVERAGE BULGARIAN MEDIA HAVE GIVEN EVENTS IN FRANCE DURING THE EIGHT YEARS WHEN KOSTOV FUNCTIONED THERE IN JOURNALISTIC CAPACITY.

7. AS ONE OF MY COLLEAGUES HERE PUT IT, "THE MORE SMOKE THE BULGARIANS GENERATE ABOUT THIS CASE, THE MORE PEOPLE WILL BE CONVINCED THERE IS A REAL FIRE."

HERZ

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